

ReZero Extra: Mayonnaise Scramble

Speaker Color Code: Ram, Rem, Subaru, Emilia, etc.

“If we’re going to make the very best mayonnaise, the best there ever was, there are some ingredients we absolutely need! The first is a burning **love** and **passion!**”

“Yes, please leave it to Rem.”

“Just get to the recipe already.”

As Subaru clenches his fist dramatically, the twins sandwich him with polar opposite reactions. At the moment, Subaru stands in the kitchen, a plain apron draped over his butler’s suit. Joining him in his valiant quest for mayonnaise, Rem gazes back at Subaru with an ardent fire in her eyes (though thankfully, her horn stays hidden.) On the other hand, Ram doesn’t even bother hiding her bored, listless face (currently washing dishes.)

“My knowledge is honestly kind of shaky, but I have a feeling it only took a few ingredients to make.”

“All we need to do is mix the ingredients together, so the difficulty level should be fairly low. If the recipe had called for curing or fermenting, this whole exercise would have been hopeless though.”

“It really wasn’t that tricky of a process. Damn, if only I’d paid more attention when Mom made it at home.”

It was far too late to worry about at this point.

“It’s, **mayo** makin’ time!”, his enthusiastic mother suddenly spouted one day. Back then, Subaru didn’t notice her gathering any particularly special ingredients. Then again, her homemade mayonnaise was a complete failure, and his mother, sick and tired of trying, eventually settled for a store-bought brand.

“If anything, only Dad was persistent enough to have a shot. In the end, he single-handedly finished the homemade mayonnaise, but he thought it was still inferior to the store-bought kind. It never even made it to the dinner table.”

Subaru’s father took responsibility for the botched home cooking and personally disposed of it.

Thinking back, as a self-proclaimed **Mayo Fanatic**, Subaru regrets not tasting it to discover just *what* was so different from the store bought kind. But again, it was far too late to worry about.

To think though, that after all this time, Subaru *himself* would go head to head with homemade mayonnaise. ---The blood of Mayo Fanatics *truly* runs deep.

“Alright, that’s enough reminiscing. Let’s go over what we’ll need *besides* love and passion. Let’s see, first and foremost we’ve just gotta have eggs.”

When you think mayonnaise, you think eggs. To Subaru who is just as fanatical about egg dishes, the egg is a sacred ingredient, one he can't possibly live without. *Amen.*

“From Subaru-kun's description, it seemed like fowl eggs were most suitable, so Rem prepared them for today. They are the same ones Rem uses in her everyday cooking.”

“That's probably for the best. Striking out a weird, novel path is the first step to an upset stomach. Besides, the ingredients are just a bit *different* here. That alone worries me.”

With this world's unique ecosystem, it'd be unreasonable to prude over using the exact same ingredients. While they have similar uses, one must remember that they're not one and the same. Subaru had a feeling that even a small side trip could devolve into an epically *Bizarre Adventure*.

“Cooking is a science afterall. I'd rather handle this carefully like a science experiment, not a free-spirited adventure into the culinary world.”

“If Subaru-kun had wished it, Rem would have brought higher quality ingredients.”

“If we put any real money into a hit-or-miss operation like this, you know we'll just go bankrupt right? Also, what the heck would a 'higher quality' egg even come from? Some sort of brand name chicken?”

“Winged dragon eggs and other top class items, Rem knows a market that sometimes sell them.”

“Using dragon eggs to make mayonnaise!? What the hell *is* that, it sounds terrifying! Besides, doesn’t this country *worship* dragons!?”

How could a country that reveres The Dragon be gobbling up his kin, Subaru wonders. Ram sighs wearily at his ignorance,

“Does Barusu really think dragons and The Dragon are one and the same? Listen, there exists an insurmountable wall between The Dragon and some common dragon you’d find anywhere. Understand?”

“Listening to this is just making me even more confused.... so basically, normal dragons and *The Dragon* are treated differently?”

Isn’t that obvious?, Ram seems to say as she listlessly shrugs back. As Subaru glares back with a sour face, Rem pulls on his sleeve, raising her gaze up toward him.

“As Nee-san says, there is no reason to worry. If Subaru-kun wants, Rem will go procure winged dragon eggs right this second...”

“Hearing you say ‘procure,’ I can’t tell if you’ll be hunting for them in a market or a bonafide nest! For now, we should start with chicken eggs. If they turn out to be no good, *then* I’ll ask you for the dragon eggs.”

With his commoner’s tongue and taste for cheaper foods, Subaru doubts they would tread such an absurdly extravagant path. But the sight of a heartbroken Rem, shrinking ever smaller in disappointment, keeps him from rejecting it outright. Hearing her proposal merely put on hold, Rem lifts her head, her face lighting right back up.

“Anyways, presenting the second sacred ingredient, cooking oil!”

“The manor keeps a sizeable stock for everyday use. It should be alright even when Barusu wastes it by the vaseful.”

“Actually, now that I think about it, is it really alright to be using the manor’s stock like this?”

Subaru had neglected mentioning his mission to Roswaal, but he figured it was selfless enough that the lord wouldn’t mind. At the same time, going overboard and sowing the seeds of discontent ----Subaru wanted to avoid this at all costs.

“Please be at ease. Any ingredients used today, Rem will pay for them. Subaru-kun won’t need to worry about anything.”

“I almost went along with your kindness, but now that I think things through, doesn’t this make me the epitome of human scum!?”

Hearing Rem so unhesitant to dip into her personal savings, Subaru desperately begs her to take back half the expenses once he gets his paycheck. Rem, who had planned to take the whole brunt of the costs herself, wouldn’t yield any further than this.

In the face of Rem’s overly selfless dedication, Subaru feels pangs of concern for her. Beyond his vision, Ram watches their conversation with suspicious eyes, her mood rapidly boiling from absolute zero to *extreme danger* level. With the overly-attached Rem by his side, Subaru holds back a sigh, continuing on with the mayonnaise briefing.

“Well, that should be it for the major ingredients. All that’s left is, umm, well first there’s salt.”

“Solte, is it?”

“And then some pepper?”

“The peppa is right here.”

“Sugar... I don’t remember needing any, but might as well have it out.”

“Sugar is prepared as well.”

“I wonder why sugar’s the only one that stays the same....”

With a medley of spices lined up before him, Subaru puts a hand to his chin with an enthusiastic “Alright!”

Eggs and oil, as well as a number of seasonings ---Subaru feels that this was just about everything. The main problem, how should he go about mixing them, and in what amounts?

“Well, Rome wasn’t built in a day. Let’s take any mistakes in stride as we do this.”

“Yes, understood. So, if a *mistake*, if Rem makes one, don’t.... please don’t throw Rem away....”

“Whooa! Why do you look like you’re going to cry!?”

Grasping Subaru’s sleeve with her small hands, Rem’s delicate frame silently trembles in horror. For a girl who judges herself so harshly, an exercise that guarantees failure might be too much for her.

In a sense, this trial-and-error approach is Rem’s natural enemy. Trying to comfort the rapidly shaking Rem, Subaru says with a nod,

“You know what? Accepting failure right from the start, that’s a loser’s attitude. Let’s take this on like it’ll work out in one fell swoop! Besides, I’m the type that can’t read the atmosphere and somehow succeeds the first time around. This’ll be cake.”

Subaru puts on a bold face, but his mind is drenched in a cold sweat as he turns toward the ingredients.

With a concerned Rem watching over him, he could no longer just haphazardly mix things together.

The anxiety from the last few days ---all of it rushes back to Subaru, his heart pumping at an astonishing rate.

“This kitchen’s like a battlefield.... Alright, let’s do this. Rem, gimme an egg.”

“Yes. Will two hundred be enough for you, Subaru-kun?”

“Do I look like I want to *swim* in mayonnaise!? One’s enough!”

Rem carries a basket with a bonafide *mountain* of eggs, conveying her brimming enthusiasm. Blinded by her brilliance, Subaru flinches back as he sheepishly retrieves a single egg. For now, he cracks its contents into a nearby bowl and begins cooking.

Subaru tosses what seems like a reasonable amount of salt and pepper into the bowl. He can’t show any hesitation. Next to him, Rem watches his performance with hopeful, expectant eyes. Wavering here and filling those eyes with tears, that would be inexcusable.

With a strange pressure on his back, Subaru has no choice but to believe in himself and his parents’ guidance. In a flurry, he starts

mixing the egg and seasonings, introducing oil after they feel reasonably mixed. It's all coming back now. Yes, when it comes down to it, you just have to keep mixing, mixing, mixing ---is what his parents probably said at one point.

Adding oil, adding *more* oil. With a passion that could burn the contents of the bowl, Subaru single-mindedly pours oil. And, as if avenging the efforts of his fallen parents, he furiously mixes.

His breath shortens, sweat drips from forehead to jaw, his field of vision goes white. Even then, clawing desperately toward a frontier unknown, *unreachable* to man, Subaru pours his very soul into mixing and mixing and *mixing*.

Sound grows distant, color fades from the world. But in return, his senses sharpen. Subaru's skin tingles from the slightest perturbations in the air as he stares single-mindedly at the bowl of mayonnaise. And then,

"It separated."

Love and passion weren't enough afterall.

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----The quest for mayonnaise feverishly continues.

Yet no matter how you'd mince it, Subaru's efforts were met with complete and utter defeat.

How many eggs have been sacrificed toward the venerable mountain of failures emerging in this kitchen? *No*, rather than a

mountain, it was more like a yellowish, whitish sea of blasphemy, appalling any who lay eyes on it.

Having already lost dozens of eggs to this detestable sea, Subaru could no longer bear such callous wastefulness of life.

“Damnnit! It’s not even close! How could this be! The method should be about right.... What am I lacking!? Damn. In my efforts to bring mayonnaise to another world, who would have thought that the world *itself* would rebel against me----!?”

After being summoned to another world, using one’s knowledge to bring about a culture shock, Subaru coveted such an event. In spite of himself, the uncultured, inexperienced Subaru did not anticipate so many pitfalls along the way.

“Damn, I underestimated the unreasonable nature of this cruel, fickle world. If just making mayonnaise strains my soul this far, anything more ambitious is just impossible.”

The encroaching despair threatens to snap his heart in half. And yet, even after facing such crushing disappointment time and time again, Subaru’s heart has stayed strong. Even when reaching and reaching for a place his hands could not seem to grasp.

But to think that he would revisit this feeling just from making mayonnaise----

“Wow, when I think about it, I despair *a lot*, don’t I.”

A torrent of heart-wrenching, despair-inducing experiences come up in recent memory.

Unfortunately, no matter how many of these experiences Subaru accumulates, he won't gain any sort of resistance to them, nor will he somehow *level up*. It was truly a pointless parameter to be raising so thoroughly.

Such thoughts invade Subaru's mind as he suffers failure by the bowlful. Fearing his attitude only invites beratement from Ram and disappointment in Rem, he quickly glances towards the twins.

“The consistency and texture appear to be improving, but the taste is unacceptable. What does Nee-sama think?”

“Drizzle the cooking oil gradually over time, seasoning with solte and peppa to taste. Mixing looks to require quite a bit of patience, so Ram isn't suitable for it.”

Rem and Ram whisk away while chatting casually. To top it off, when Subaru sneaks a peek at their bowls,

“Wait wait wait *what?* I'm the one with actual experience with the stuff, so why do yours actually look like mayonnaise!?”

In their bowls, a highly viscous substance emerges. Though Ram's creation seems slightly closer to the real deal.

“Wh-, *why?*”

“This is the difference between those who cook and those who don’t. A trifling lack of knowledge poses no problem at all to a seasoned veteran. Know your place.”

“You say that, but have I ever seen you make anything besides steamed yams!?”

Subaru talks back like a sore loser, but Ram, with a bored expression, appears largely unfazed.

On the other hand, Subaru, seeing how far behind he is, falls ever further into despair. Rem puts on a smile and tries to cheer him up,

“It’s okay. Subaru-kun should use the methods Subaru-kun believes in. Even if Rem views Subaru-kun’s technique as *irrational*, and it seems *illogical* next to basic cooking theory, and honestly Rem does think Subaru-kun’s cooking is *inexcusable* to the eggs. That’s just how Subaru-kun lives his life.”

“So it’s finally come, the unintended criticisms that stab like knives to the heart! And you even take a stab at my way of life!? I don’t wanna be judged like this just for trying to make goddamn mayonnaise!”

Subaru yells back at Rem who tries, and fails spectacularly, to support him. He goes back to inspecting the twins’ bowls of proto-mayo.

Eyes like saucers, Subaru watches as they mix while slowly pouring oil a little at a time.

“Ooohh, now I get it. You can’t just dump it all in at once.”

“If too much is poured at once, the mixture separates too quickly. Also, the recipe seems to call for consistent mixing. Requiring both patience and perseverance ---quite a compelling dish.”

“Wow! Amazing! Rem, you’re amazing! You did a good job! You did a *great* job! Good girl, good girl, **WONDERFUL!**”

Subaru’s lighthearted compliments quickly raise Rem’s spirits.

Hearing his words, her face lights up. “I-, is that so~” she asks back with an embarrassed smile.

While quite a handful, Rem’s personality is becoming noticeably easy to handle.

“Of course, the whole point of the mayonnaise was to make *me* look good.”

Due to his poor self-esteem, Subaru constantly looks for ways to get praise from others. And with some self-confidence, he could finally escape from ‘helpless little doggie’ status ---is what Subaru saw a lot of in manga and games.

But with Rem single-handedly running the manor like clockwork, Subaru hardly ever has a chance to prove himself. And even *then* she probably thinks to herself, “Not yet, there’s no doubt that Rem can go further.”

For that reason, Subaru challenged mayonnaise.

But conceding guaranteed failure without Rem, Subaru enlisted her, hoping that she would gain at least a little confidence as well. Those were Subaru's motivations for this operation. It *definitely* wasn't just for selfish, personal gain.

“But if you do even better than me, then what's the point? Damn, you're really messing with the wind beneath my wings.”

“If we're talking about messing with wind, that would be Ram's specialty. Barusu, take a look at Ram's bowl.”

With a scornful tone, Ram arrogantly shows off its contents. Within her bowl, a small cyclone of wind spins rapidly. The torrent manipulates the whisk's end, stirring at a truly inhuman pace. Seeing the proto-mayo slowly transform from the fierce wind, a smiling Subaru nods,

“These skills of yours are way too enviable.”

“Physical aptitude aside, isn't Ram's sharp mind a given? Barusu on the other hand...”

After snidely side glancing toward Subaru, Ram turns her attention to Rem. Oblivious to her gaze, Rem continues whisking away as if her very life was on the line. Seeing her little sister's determined face, Ram's lips form a slight smile.

“When depended on, one wants to show an impressive side of themselves. Ram’s tiny pride as an older sister ---does Barusu have anything that even comes close to matching it?”

While inferior to Rem in terms of ability, Ram still carries herself as her older sister.

In her own way, Ram still takes the lead and guides Rem. Of course, her only superior quality is her excessive rudeness.

“In the end, if you finish this off, it won’t do any good for Rem’s self-esteem. Like this, it’ll just be an endless loop of ‘As expected, Onee-sama is amazing. In comparison, Rem is just...’ And I doubt you want her clinging to me either.”

Subaru can’t afford to let Rem’s attachment get any more extreme. If her praise-seeking escalates any further, one day he’ll be going to the toilet, and Rem will follow after him, offering to wipe his butt. *Nightmare fuel.*

As Subaru desperately pushes away his fears, Ram mutters “How would that ever happen” with a sigh.

“Ram can’t spare any more mana. Anyway, if a path is shown to Rem, she can walk it on her own. Having discovered that path, Ram’s pride is preserved as well. Will that be enough of a compromise, Barusu?”

“Definitely not a cute way to put it, nee-sama. ---Wait, have you actually been pushing yourself?”

Back in the forest, Ram used wind magic to the point where she couldn't even move.

If this operation put a burden on her again, then it would partly be Subaru's fault. However, Ram shakes her head at Subaru's concern.

“Ram honestly sees no benefit in going further. Even if Ram finishes the mayonnaise, it would only make Barusu happy. Ughhh, the very thought is *sickening*. Ram will stop this very second.”

Ram carelessly tosses her bowl into the sink, yielding with a rather refreshing sportsmanship. Yet, no matter what her true intentions are, she still manages to enrage Subaru.

“Nee-sama?”

“Rem. Your sister is tired and will be dropping out. Ram will be drinking tea in the dining hall. Just keep Barusu company until lunchtime.”

Ram leaves the rest to her hard working sister as she leaves the galley. Shocked by her audacity, a sighing Subaru retrieves her bowl.

“What a waste. She didn't have to throw it out. How many baby chicks does she think I've sacrificed without even getting this far?”

Subaru's failure streak is beginning to look pitiful. Upset, he sticks a finger into the bowl and brings some yellowish proto-mayo to his mouth.

"The texture's just about there, but.... bleh, something's just not right with it."

Rich in oiliness, similar in appearance, the contents seem very close to true mayonnaise. And yet, with this taste, it might as well be a different food altogether.

It lacks something, but not additional salt and pepper.

They required more than just seasoning, ----something *fundamental* is missing.

"It needs something. What is it, I don't have a clue.... sweetness, spiciness, saltiness, it doesn't feel like any of those."

Subaru tastes the mix over and over but can only cock his head in puzzlement. The proto-mayo's incomplete flavor, the more he tries it, the more disgusting its oiliness seems to become.

At his side, Rem joins his taste-testing. Eyes closed, she scrutinizes the flavor spreading in her mouth. Deep in thought, she mutters a simple "hmmm."

Appearance-wise, it's really close. The problem is this very last step, deciphering the final ingredient. Subaru's thoughts are interrupted when Rem, eyes popped open, utters a single word.

"----sourness."

“Hwa?”

“Judging by this taste, adding a little sourness should greatly enhance the flavor.”

Blinking at Rem’s proposal, Subaru suffers another mouthful of proto-mayo to check.

Alongside its rich oiliness, a purely disgusting feeling spreads in his mouth. But what if a tongue-numbing sourness was introduced? From this holy marriage, a pair of angel’s wings emerge, and the proto-mayo takes flight toward a bright blue sky. He can finally see the answer.

“Sourness! Of course, sourness! We need sourness! What, what should we add!? Sour things, sour things.... like oranges!?”

“Lemomu fruits or vinegie, Rem thinks these would work best.”

“Lemon juice or vinegar! I think so too! If this works, it’ll be like a dream!”

Trusting Rem’s judgement, Subaru pulls out a number of seasonings. And after crushing and juicing several lemon-like fruits, a relentlessly insipid smell surges through the galley. With both sources of sourness prepared, he nods to Rem. Subaru takes the lemomu juice and the bowl Ram threw out. Meanwhile, Rem adds the vinegie to her own bowl.

“All that’s left is to stir like maniacs! Until our very souls wear down to nothing....!”

In contrast to his feverish excitement, Subaru introduces the lemon juice slowly and delicately.

Adding to the proto-mayo little by little, Subaru desperately holds back his fiery passion. The dish is taking shape.

As he pours in his time, pours in his veritable love, before Subaru’s eyes, the proto-mayo assumes its final form.

He nervously takes a breath, a sharp pain ringing in his dry throat. And yet, Subaru seeks not water, but the viscous substance before him.

He turns back. Rem is with him. She gives him a nod, her trust and support in him unwavering.

Nodding back, Subaru turns toward the bowl. This strong oily smell, this sour aroma that lightly tickles his nose ----*there’s no mistake. This is it!* Subaru’s inner Mayo Fanatic screams.

At this moment, Subaru cuts open an entirely new path-----.

With a single finger, he scoops a sample.

Subaru stares lovingly at the thick, viscous substance that paints his finger a rich white, slowly bringing it to his mouth. Captivated, he sucks at his finger almost erotically. Thoroughly lapping up every drop, his lips smack spectacularly as they part from his finger.

An intoxicated look appears on his face. Finally, Subaru turns back toward Rem,

“----GROOOSSS!! It’s a failure! This wasn’t it at all! BLEH!!”

“Su-, Subaru-kun, are you okay!? Did you add too much lemomu juice?”

“Nononono, this was just *fundamentally* wrong! It’s like how wasabi and mustard and habanero peppers all have different types of spiciness! This was the *wrong* sourness, a total **Category Error!**”

The sourness of lemomu juice yielded a catastrophic failure. Desperately wiping the remaining proto-mayo from his tongue, Subaru lays his tear-filled eyes on Rem.

This final bowl contains the last of their hopes and dreams. But behind it, a crushing anxiety threatens eternal despair.

If Rem too fails, that would truly be the end. But after all they’ve been through, there was no turning back.

In Subaru’s gaze, a glimmering, fleeting hope and a fearful defeatism swirl about in endless combat. Rem handles her bowl, fully aware of the sheer weight it carries.

Yet within her, a resolution to face the truth head on is born. Taking a breath, the girl’s face no longer shows hesitation. Her weak, dependent persona strips away. All that remains is a *seeker of truth*, a figure singlemindedly pursuing her objective.

“----Rem.”

At Subaru's beckon, Rem slightly nods.
Between the two, words are no longer necessary.

Subaru's trust pushing her on, Rem slowly dips a finger into her bowl.

For a few seconds, she stares at the white fluid adhering to her fingertip, the world at a standstill. What ran through this girl's head in those few seconds, ----nobody knows.

Time moves forth and, without further hesitation, Rem consumes the proto-mayo. Her red tongue traverses her white finger seductively. A pink sigh shrouds her fingertip. Rem closes her eyes to experience the flavor.

A brief span of time, a fleeting encounter, ----yet an eternity seems to pass between them. And then, the girl opens her eyes. With an expressionless face, Subaru asks her.

And her answer----,

"This new flavor born here today, ----we name thee Mayonnaise."

Scholars tell of this moment as the first step in the spread of Mayo Fanatics throughout the world.

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By the time Subaru and Rem complete the mayonnaise, it is well past the point when they start preparing for lunch.

After briefly celebrating, their neglected obligations put a damper on their spirits. At that moment, a certain figure comes to their aide.

“Ram thought this would happen. Don’t worry, preparations have been made.”

Ram proudly stands before them with a plate of her specialty, steamed yams.

While her steamed yams honestly taste delicious, the thought of offering it as lunchtime cuisine, to an esteemed noble no less, seems somewhat questionable.

However! Mayonnaise, the root of this predicament, could very well be the solution.

“And so, this is the ultimate flavor, handed down by my people, called mayonnaise. Put it on the steamed yams, and you’ll experience its taste to the fullest. Give it a try!”

See, there’s a legitimate reason for this shabby-looking meal,
Subaru’s conduct seems to say.

Atop the luxurious table, cradled by gorgeous tableware, lies a plain display of steamed yams topped with mayonnaise.

“Once agaaaain, this is quite a dish you’ve cooked up.”

“I wanted you all to understand the greatness of mayonnaise. To accentuate its flavor, I even forced Rem and Ram to serve only

the bare essentials. If you've got any complaints, I'll take full responsibility. And then-

"And then?"

"My efforts from the majuu incident and today's lunch, they'll cancel out, and we'll call it even....!"

"It was the same when you saved Emilia-sama, but Subaru-kun sure is aaaawful at spending his rewards wisely."

Roswaal accepts Subaru's arrangement with a wry smile. He easily saw through Subaru's half-decent explanation. Especially since behind Subaru, an apologetic-looking Rem squirms restlessly. Beside her, Ram, who has absolutely no qualms with serving steamed yams, sticks her chest out in pride. Such courage.

As the conversation unfolds, Roswaal is not the only one to express reluctance. Subaru looks toward the person whose reaction most matters to him, only to find Emilia eyeing her plate cautiously.

"How is it Emilia-tan? Feel like eating?"

"It's my first time seeing something like this, so it's honestly a bit scary. But Rem guarantees its taste, and Subaru's so passionate about it, so I want to believe it's good."

Admittedly, it didn't have the kind of appearance that invites first-timers to try it without hesitation.

If it's come to this, let's just force someone who won't hold it against me too much, Subaru decides as he looks around the table.

“Hm? Where's Beako?”

“Beatrice-sama came in a while ago, but she turned around and left after seeing today's menu.”

“That damn loli, I'll remember this....”

Leftovers are unacceptable, Subaru thinks, silently deciding to bring some mayo-yam to the library later.

In the end, without a vanguard to bravely lead the way, Subaru sighs,

“Alright, there's just no choice. Puck, you're up.”

“What, me?”

Shaking his head bitterly, Subaru bestows the honor of vanguard to the small cat-like spirit.

Rem plates a smallish yam next to Emilia, Puck sitting cozily in front of it. He looks like he wants to rub his face with his paws and groom himself with his tail as usual, but resists while indoors.

Subaru's intense gaze fixed on him, a troubled Puck looks to Emilia for help. However, Emilia can only look back with an apologetic face,

“Puck, please.”

“....I'm really weak to Lia's requests. Guess I've got no choice.”

Puck reluctantly gives his head a light slap and turns to his yam. He takes one last look with his beady, black eyes, his pink nose twitching as he casually mentions,

“By the way, if I were to die, then everything but Lia will be frozen in a violent maelstrom, as sworn in our contract.... don't forget okay?”

“Don't reveal something that scary so casually. You won't die, so stop worrying!”

Subaru yells back after what sounds like Puck's final farewell. Puck leans his body toward the steamed yam and clings to it. Then, with his small mouth, he bites off a chunk,

“Nom nom, pretty tasty.”

“Hey, don't just go for the yam, taste the mayonnaise too.”

“Saw through me eh? Well, here goes. Aah---n.”

His plan to eat just the yam portion revealed, Puck laughs nervously as he laps up the mayonnaise. As he chews at the mayo-yam, all eyes are on Puck.

While Subaru had a chance to approve the finished product, he had no idea how others would react to it. An overwhelming feeling of tension fills the air as everyone awaits Puck's reaction. And then, the grey, cat-like spirit slowly raises his face,

“----Hey, this actually tastes good.”

Puck remarks as he lightly paws at his steamed yam, his print like a personal stamp of approval.

With that, lunchtime truly begins.

Emilia, who previously glared ever vigilantly at the steamed yam, gives in and stuffs a piece into her mouth. As she chews, the mayonnaise's rich, creamy texture envelopes her tongue,

“Oh, it's delicious. Wait, oh no, I can't stop myself.”

As if enraptured by its taste, a troubled Emilia involuntarily shovels away at her yam.

With Roswaal also remarking “My, hooooow delicious,” his royal tastes also seem satisfied. As a mayonnaise evangelist, Subaru could not hope for a better result.

“Alright, success! Rem, you did really great.”

Overjoyed with the unexpectedly high rating, Subaru pats Rem's back. Still feeling troubled, Rem shakes her head at his praise,

“No no, Rem didn't do much of anything. These results are the fruits of Subaru-kun's efforts. Rem was even careless enough to forget about preparing lunch.... without Nee-sama and Subaru-kun, Roswaal-sama would have surely scolded Rem.”

“You don't need to always think so negatively. Ram and I can be at fault too, so why don't you look at yourself in a more positive light?”

Subaru can only shrug at Rem's poor evaluation of herself. In reality, Ram and Subaru's actions are the ones really worth reprimanding.

If anything, for convincing Rem to help with the mayonnaise and causing her such distress, Subaru feels that he should be the one apologizing.

“You know, it's all thanks to Rem that we finished the mayonnaise. With this, it's like a flower bloomed in a place called the dinner table. I'm honestly really grateful.”

Subaru says, fully aware that this may devolve into a perpetual battle of praising and rebuking. Subaru decides to forcefully push an onslaught of compliments until she has no choice but to accept.

“----it's all, it's all thanks to Rem?”

Miraculously falling for his praise, Rem's face lights right back up. In his mind, Subaru smiles wryly at her simple personality, but he accepts it as one of her cuter points.

“Yeah, that's right. Without Rem, it would've been flat out impossible. Take pride in yourself.”

“Was Rem useful to Subaru-kun?”

“Oh, absolutely. As a true blue mayo-addict, you saved my life. I was seriously at ***critical danger level***, you know?”

“Critical danger level....”

“It was at the point where I'd have *died* if I didn't practically swim in the stuff. But thanks to you, my life goes on. Thank you God, Buddha, Rem-sama, Emilia-tan.”

The ridiculousness of Subaru's praise seems to know no bounds. But Rem gazes at him with a serious face and nods energetically,

“Understood. Please leave it to Rem.”

“----Hm? Alright. I'll leave it all to you!”

Subaru doesn't quite know what she means, but he's onboard for anything that helps her self-esteem.

He gives her a thumbs up as he heads toward the spot next to Emilia, coveting more praise for the meal.

Unbeknownst to Subaru, Rem quietly concocts her plan as she makes a guts pose behind him.

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----Early next morning

The daily life of a servant starts exceptionally early. Subaru fights back a yawn as he gets out of bed and makes his way down the hall.

While yesterday was tough, bringing mayonnaise into this world was a small miracle.

From now on, Subaru's meals will be replete with the viscous, oily nectar. It's all thanks to Rem.

“Oh hey, speak of the devil. Mornin' Rem-rin.”

“----ah, Subaru-kun. Good morning to you.”

Apparently having woken up before Subaru, Rem excitedly hops towards him from the other end of the hall.

Face brimming with light, she looks expectantly at Subaru as if waiting for his response.

“Oh yeah, thanks a lot for yesterday. It’s thanks to you that I got to re-experience a flavor from my hometown.”

“No, it wasn’t much. If Rem was able to be of use to Subaru-kun, then that makes Rem happy beyond words. ----It’s okay to praise Rem though?”

An imaginary tail wags happily behind her. Softly plopping a hand on Rem’s blue hair, Subaru gently strokes her head. Eyes closed and cooing softly, Rem looks to be in pure bliss.

Subaru suddenly feels like he’s doing something incredibly *lewd*. *What in the world am I doing so early in the morning...* he asks himself.

“Oh yes, Subaru-kun. Did Subaru-kun sweat a little while sleeping last night?”

“Huh, no way, do I smell? Yesterday was pretty hot, now that I think about it.”

Subaru did indeed have some trouble sleeping last night. Shocked by Rem’s discovery, he quickly raises an arm to his face.

Yet no matter how much he sniffs, he can’t seem to notice any particularly strong stench. Subaru tilts his head in confusion. But for Rem to point it out, it must be quite something.

“It’d be pretty embarrassing if Emilia-tan noticed too. I’ll go wash up a bit.”

“In that case, please make use of the bathhouse. If it’s one of the smaller baths, using it in the morning should be no problem.

----Rem will even wash Subaru-kun’s back.”

“Nah, that’s alright. Girls should be more reserved about this sort of thing, okay?”

“How disappointing.”

Passing it off as a joke, Rem withdraws. However, Subaru decides that accepting might actually be for the best. After all, if Rem goes so far as to suggest a bath, then perhaps the **Smell** radiating from his body is more akin to an unfathomable stench. Because of Rem’s fondness for him, this encounter wasn’t so much an issue. If it had been Ram or Beatrice though.... the very thought threatens to snap Subaru’s delicate spirit in two.

“You know what, I’ll take you up on your offer.”

“Yes. ----Please enjoy.”

A hidden intention lies in Rem’s reply. But Subaru, desperate to rid himself of his stench, doesn’t notice.

Parting with Rem, he quickly makes his way to the baths.

Taking a bath first thing in the morning, in a world where showers didn’t exist, it was quite the refreshing experience.

The life of a shut-in entails the very reversal of night and day. As a result, Subaru would always arrive at the bathhouse at unusual times, only able to take a quick shower.

In this world, taking a shower isn't even possible. Moreover, with girls nearby, he couldn't afford to look shabby and unkempt. As a result, Subaru puts a little more effort into his grooming.

"But man, having the bathhouse all to myself, it's oddly satisfying."

Laying his eyes on the wide bathhouse, a nude Subaru pointlessly sticks his chest out in pride.

An enormous bath rivaling that of a public bathhouse's fills the center of the room. Formed from a marble-like stone, it currently lies empty, awaiting its daily scrubbing. Subaru's aim isn't this massive tub but rather, a smaller one sitting in the corner of the bathhouse.

An economical bath, used in Roswaal's absence. More than large enough for a single person, it also comes equipped with magic crystals to adjust the water temperature with ease.

Laying his eyes on the tub,

"A comfortably rising steam.... Looks like Rem set it up just right for me."

Subaru arrived at the baths after quickly heading to his room for a change of clothes. He supposes that during that time, Rem had quietly adjusted the water for him.

It would've been a light task considering her usual workload.

Alone in the baths and completely nude, ----with no one's eyes on him, an overwhelming excitement builds in Subaru's heart.
The result,

“*First* into the baths, it's Natsuki Subaru ---- This bath is all mine!”

Exhilarated, Subaru dashes through the bathhouse with a *Hop, Step, Jump!* Unafraid of slipping on the wet floor, his ***First Rate Specimen*** dangles and whips as he leaps gallantly ----his body twirling in midair, Subaru dives straight into the bath.
And then,

“----BLUH!?”

Pluuooo, a viscous, almost *alien* sound is made as his body sinks into the bath.

Shocked by the unexpected feeling and warmth, Subaru's body writhes against the slimy liquid. He tries desperately to bring his face to the surface ----His eyes refuse to open.

“What, what the hell!? What is this *sensation*, what is this *situation*!? Everything's all slimy! Oh my god! It's even getting in my wounds! This is bad, ***BUT WHY!*** Am I going to die here!”

Throwing himself out of the bath, Subaru rolls around violently and shrieks in terror.

With a sticky, viscous substance covering his body, every attempt at standing just causes him to slip and slip. When his hands press against the floor, they too just slip and slip and *slip*.

An indecipherable motive. A truly unexpected situation. His eyes still closed shut, a world of utter darkness assaults Subaru as alarms blare in his mind. This encroaching fear for one's life, to taste it again after just a few days. Subaru berates himself.

How could he have been so *stupid*. How could he have been so *careless*. He had forgotten how cruelly and mercilessly this world's God *plays* with his destiny.

*Oh, you thought you were safe? Sorry, **BAD END!***

Subaru curses himself for not seeing this coming.

Struggling to breathe, Subaru gasps as his eyes bulge at the bathhouse ceiling.

Sprawled out on the floor, his body coated in the viscous goop, Subaru desperately pushes his failing five senses to their utmost limit. His brain buzzes with a torrential whirl.

His voice still rings. Maybe he could call for help. But what if this was a trap? If he calls for help, he'd just be leading his savior to their grave. But if he doesn't, then the perpetrator will most certainly come to finish him off. Unable to yell out ----for a moment, he thinks of blindly dashing out like a wild animal. Thoughts flying rapidly, Subaru breaks his train of thought,

“If I die, hide my body for three days!.... In that time, make preparations for.... hm?”

In a panic, Subaru gives his last rites. As his face writhes and folds, a peculiar sensation takes hold of his tongue. Viscous, oily, and above all else, a hint of *sourness* ---- **this is!**

“----Rem! Rem! Get in here!”

“Yes! Did you call for Rem, Subaru-kun!”

As if she was standing right outside all along, Rem’s voice immediately answers back. She comes rushing toward Subaru, wiping his face of the viscous substance with a towel.

“How is it, the feeling of swimming in mayonnaise? Rem did her best to satisfy Subaru-kun’s request. ----Rem doesn’t mind being praised?”

Praise me, praise me, her smiling face seems to say. Standing up, Subaru uses the towel to wipe off the rest of his mayonnaise-laden body. And, returning Rem’s innocent smiling face with his own smile,

“**ARE YOU AN IDIOT!?**”

In the early hours of the morning, Subaru’s yells boom throughout the bathhouse.

Seeing his soulmate, mayonnaise, wasted so callously, Subaru feels a rage like no other. Eventually, an oversleeping Ram awakens as well. At her elder sister's hands, an apologetically kneeling Rem suffers a lecture of unspeakable length, unspeakable severity, and *unspeakable violence*.

“It's tasty, so it'd be nice if we always had some,” Emilia says in the aftermath. So it was decided that a sizeable stock of mayonnaise would always be maintained at the Roswaal manor.

In the end, the plan to use mayonnaise to boost Rem's self-confidence backfired spectacularly. After this incident, Rem still bears a trauma toward mayonnaise. Despite her genuine skill in making it, it ultimately fell to Ram to produce mayonnaise for the manor.